

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests entry of the following amendment and remarks contained herein in response to the Office Action mailed August 11, 2004. Applicant respectfully submits that the amendment and remarks contained herein place the instant application in condition for allowance. Upon entry of the amendments in this response, claims 1 – 66 remain pending. In particular, Applicant adds claims 30 – 66, amends claims 2, 4 – 6, 8 – 9, and 11 – 17 and cancels claims 1, 3, 7, 10, 15, and 18 - 29 without prejudice, waiver, or disclaimer. Applicant cancels claims 1, 3, 7, 10, 15, and 18 – 29 merely to reduce the number of disputed issues and to facilitate early allowance and issuance of other claims in the present application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of these canceled claims in a continuing application, if Applicant so chooses, and does not intend to dedicate the canceled subject matter to the public. Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims are respectfully requested. In addition, Applicant does not intend to admit anything regarding any other statements in the Office Action that is not explicitly referenced in this response.

I. Examiner Interview

Applicant first wishes to express his sincere appreciation for the time that Examiner Rimell spent with Applicant's Attorneys, Jeff Kuester, and Anthony Bonner during a telephone discussion on November 1, 2004 regarding the outstanding Office Action. During that conversation, Examiner Rimell seemed to indicate that it would be potentially beneficial for Applicant to make amendments contained herein. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that Examiner Rimell carefully consider this response and the amendments.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

The Office Action indicates that claims 1 - 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication 2002/0049510 to Gropper (“*Gropper*”). In response, Applicant has cancelled independent claims 1, 10, 18, 26, and 28, has added new independent claims 30, 37, and 45, and has amended dependent claims 2, 4 – 6, 8 – 9, and 11 – 17 to depend therefrom. Applicant submits no new matter has been added. Applicant further submits that claims 2, 4 – 6, 8 – 9, 11 – 17, and 30 – 59 are in condition for allowance. In addition, Applicant does not intend to make admissions regarding admit anything regarding any other statements in the Office Action that are not explicitly referenced in this response..

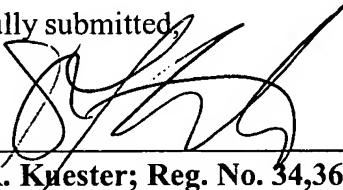
III. Cited Art Made of Record

The cited art made of record has been considered, but is not believed to affect the patentability of the presently pending claims.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that all objections and/or rejections have been traversed, rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the now pending claims 2, 4 – 6, 8 – 9, 11 – 17, and 30 – 59 are in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application and all pending claims are hereby courteously requested. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephonic conference would expedite the examination of this matter, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (770) 933-9500.

Respectfully submitted,



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